

CLAIMS

1. (Currently amended) A method of rental equipment management for a plurality of rental locations on a network of a plurality of dealerships, the network having at least one computer-server for communicating with users, said method comprising the steps of:

the users of the plurality of dealerships accessing the computer-server of the plurality of dealerships in order to access rental equipment inventory information for the plurality of rental locations in the plurality of dealerships in order to assist customers of the plurality of rental locations;

via a computer-terminal, displaying a reservation summary having reservation information pertaining to the type of rental equipment reserved and the date of reservation for each piece of rental equipment for a plurality of customer reservations of the plurality of rental locations in the plurality of dealerships; and

via the computer-server, tracking and searching rental equipment inventory information including the number of pieces of rental equipment available for in-town rental and the number of pieces of rental equipment in-town but not available for rental for each rental location for managing rental equipment availability at the plurality of rental locations in the plurality of dealerships;

wherein via the computer-terminal communicating with the computer-server, each user can search and display the number of pieces of rental equipment available for in-town rental and the number of pieces of rental equipment in-town but not available for rental for each rental location of the plurality of rental locations in the plurality of dealerships; and

wherein via the computer-server the rental equipment inventory information for each rental location in the plurality of dealerships is accessible via the network by all of the other rental locations on the network.

2. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with claim 1 further comprising the step of customizing the scope of the reservation summary to display information pertaining to one of a particular rental location, city, route and dealer.

3. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with claim 1 further comprising the step of customizing the scope of the reservation summary to display information pertaining to a particular type of reservation.

4. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with claim 3 wherein the type of reservation is selected from one of confirmed, tentative and canceled reservations.

5. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with claim 1 further comprising the step of customizing the scope of the reservation summary to display information pertaining to a particular route selection.

6. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with claim 5 wherein the route selection is selected from one of one-way rental and in-town rental.

7. (Previously presented) A method in accordance with claim 1 further comprising the step of updating the reservation information and the rental equipment inventory information regularly.

8. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 7 further comprising the step of alerting the user upon the detection of an update failure.

9. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with claim 1 wherein the equipment inventory information comprises the types of equipment available, the number of equipment designated for one-way use, the number of equipment designated for rotational use, and total equipment available.

10. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with claim 1 comprising the step of searching the equipment inventory information to find a dispatching rental location having a particular piece of equipment.

11. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with claim 10 comprising the step of dispatching the particular piece of equipment from the dispatching rental location to a receiving rental location, wherein the equipment inventory information is updated to reflect the dispatch of the equipment from the dispatching rental location to the receiving rental location.

12. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with 11 wherein the receiving rental location receives the particular piece of equipment and wherein the equipment inventory information is updated to reflect the receipt of the equipment at the receiving rental location.

13. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with claim 1 comprising the step of displaying customer information.

14. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with claim 13 comprising the step of displaying payment information.

15. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with claim 13 comprising the step of displaying notes that reflect the history of transacting with a customer.

16. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with claim 1 comprising the step of verifying the compatibility of a requested towing combination, wherein the information pertaining to the towing vehicle and information pertaining to the towed vehicle are evaluated, and a determination is made as to the safety of the towing combination.

17. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with claim 1 comprising the step of generating a script for confirmation of reservation, wherein the script comprises information pertaining to a particular reservation.

18. (Currently amended) A method of rental equipment management for a plurality of rental locations, comprising the steps of:

the plurality of rental locations on a network of a plurality of dealerships, wherein users of the plurality of dealerships accessing a computer-server of the plurality of dealerships in order to access rental equipment inventory information for the plurality of rental locations in the plurality of dealerships in order to assist customers of the plurality of rental locations;

via a computer-terminal, displaying on a screen in communication with a computer a reservation summary having reservation information pertaining to the type of rental equipment reserved and the date of reservation for each piece of rental equipment for a plurality of customer reservations of the plurality of rental locations in the plurality of dealerships;

via the computer-server, tracking and searching rental equipment inventory information including the number of pieces of rental equipment available for in-town rental and the number of pieces of rental equipment in-town but not available for rental for each rental location for managing rental equipment availability at the plurality of rental locations in the plurality of dealerships; and

wherein via the computer-terminal communicating with the computer-server, each user can search and display the number of pieces of rental equipment available for in-town rental and exclude the number of pieces of rental equipment in-town but not available for rental for each rental location of the plurality of rental locations in the plurality of dealerships; and

via the computer-server, making the reservation information and the rental equipment inventory information for each rental location in the plurality of dealerships accessible via the a computer network by all of the other rental locations of the plurality of locations.

19. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with claim 18 further comprising the step of customizing the scope of the reservation summary to display information pertaining to one of a particular rental location, city, route and dealer.

20. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with claim 18 further comprising the step of customizing the scope of the reservation summary to display information pertaining to a particular type of reservation.

21. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with claim 20 wherein the type of reservation is selected from one of confirmed, tentative and canceled reservations.

22. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with claim 18 further comprising the step of customizing the scope of the reservation summary to display information pertaining to a particular route selection.

23. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with claim 22 wherein the route selection is selected from one of one-way rental and in-town rental.

24. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 18 further comprising the step of updating the reservation information and the equipment information regularly.

25. (Original) A method in accordance with claim 24 further comprising the step of alerting the user upon the detection of an update failure.

26. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with claim 18 wherein the equipment inventory information comprises the types of equipment available, the number of equipment designated for one-way use, the number of equipment designated for rotational use, and total equipment available.

27. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with claim 18 comprising the step of searching the equipment inventory information to find a dispatching rental location having a particular piece of equipment.

28. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with claim 27 comprising the step of dispatching the particular piece of equipment from the dispatching rental location to a receiving rental location, wherein the equipment inventory information is updated to reflect the dispatch of the equipment from the dispatching rental location to the receiving rental location.

29. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with claim 28 wherein the receiving rental location receives the particular piece of equipment and wherein the equipment inventory information is updated to reflect the receipt of the equipment at the receiving rental location.

30. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with claim 18 comprising the step of displaying customer information.

31. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with claim 30 comprising the step of displaying payment information.

32. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with claim 30 comprising the step of displaying notes that reflect the history of transacting with a customer.

33. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with claim 18 comprising the step of verifying the compatibility of a requested towing combination, wherein the information pertaining to the towing vehicle and information pertaining to the towed vehicle are evaluated, and a determination is made as to the safety of the towing combination.

34. (Withdrawn) A method in accordance with claim 18 comprising the step of generating a script for confirmation of reservation, wherein the script comprises information pertaining to a particular reservation.

35. (Withdrawn) An equipment management system for tracking reservation information and equipment inventory information for a plurality of locations, comprising:
a reservation information field having information pertaining to the type of equipment reserved and the date of reservation; and

an equipment inventory field having information pertaining to the type of equipment and number of equipment available at each of the plurality of locations.

36. (Withdrawn) An equipment management system in accordance with claim 35, comprising a scope selector having at least one scope criteria, wherein upon the selection of one of the at least one scope criteria, the reservation field provides information pertaining to the selected scope criteria.

37. (Withdrawn) An equipment management system in accordance with claim 36, wherein the at least one scope criteria is selected from one of a particular rental location, city, route and dealer.

38. (Withdrawn) An equipment management system in accordance with claim 35, comprising an update indicator comprising the date and time of the last update of the system.

39. (Withdrawn) An equipment management system in accordance with claim 38, comprising an update indicator alarm that is activated if the system is not updating regularly.

40. (Withdrawn) An equipment management system in accordance with claim 35, wherein the equipment inventory field is searchable.

41. (Withdrawn) An equipment management system in accordance with claim 40, comprising a search field, wherein the search field includes a search request window, and upon activation of a search in the search field, the search field returns information pertaining to the search request.

42. (Withdrawn) An equipment management system in accordance with claim 41 wherein the search request includes a request for a location having a particular piece of equipment, and the search result includes an identification of the location having the particular equipment.

43. (Withdrawn) An equipment management system in accordance with claim 35 comprising an equipment dispatch field, the equipment dispatch field indicating the transfer of equipment from a dispatching location to a receiving location.

44. (Withdrawn) An equipment management system in accordance with claim 35 comprising a customer information field having identifying information for a customer.

45. (Withdrawn) An equipment management system in accordance with claim 35 comprising a payment information field having information regarding the type and amount of payment received from a customer.

46. (Withdrawn) An equipment management system in accordance with claim 44 comprising a notes field having information pertaining to the history of a transaction with the customer.

47. (Withdrawn) An equipment management system in accordance with claim 35 comprising a hook up information field, wherein the hook up information field receives information regarding a towing combination including a selected towing vehicle and a selected towed vehicle, provides a first signal when the towing combination is safe, and provides a second signal when the towing combination is unsafe.

48. (Withdrawn) An equipment management system in accordance with claim 35 comprising a script page, wherein the script page incorporates information pertaining to a particular reservation.